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Treatise on Slavery.

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A

TREATISE ON SLAVERY,

By an unknown Author, of Virginia.

THE advocates, or apologists for slavery, refer to various passages in the New Testament as justifying it. The following may serve as a specimen. Eph. vi. 5. "Servants be obedient unto them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart as unto Christ; not with eye service as men pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service as to the Lord and not to man; knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." Col. iii. 22. "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye service as men pleasers, but in singleness of heart fearing God." 1 Tim. vi. 1. Let as many servants as are under the yoke, count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed." 1 Peter ii. 18. "Servants, be subject to your masters, with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward; for this is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience towards God, endure grief, suffering wrongfully."

As these passages speak of servants, and command them to obey, it is thence inferred that it is not wrong to hold persons in such servitude as exists among us; it is inferred that Christians may consistently with the teaching of scripture, and their professed subjection to it, hold slaves.

To this mode of justifying, or rather trying to justify slavery from scripture, we have many objections. We will mention several of them.

1. The kind of servitude which existed in those times, and in those communities to which the epistles in the New Testament were addressed, was, from all we can learn of it, so very different from negro slavery as it exists among us, that we cannot argue from the one to the other. Were we to admit, which however we do not, as will appear hereafter, that scripture justified ser

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vitude as it then existed, it would not follow, that it justifies negro slavery as it exists among us. The one may be, and from the best information we have, is, in fact, so different from the other, that the same general rule which tolerates the one, may condemn and render unlawful the other.

The kind of servitude tolerated among the Hebrews was, as I have shown, of a very mild character; and at the same time so modified with checks and limitations, that it hardly deserved the name of compulsory servitude. Servitude among the Greeks and Romans, although not so mild as among the Jews, was by no means so hopeless and debasing, as negro-slavery is among us. I think it useless to enlarge on the points of difference. Several of them however ought to be noticed.

Slaves among the ancients were mostly captives taken in war. They were often persons of as much information and polish, and of as good families and standing in society, as those who by conquering became their masters. They were not confined to any one race of people, but to all those with whom they might have carried on successful warfare. They were not distinguished by any indelible mark from their masters. They had the prospect of being redeemed by their friends or countrymen, of being exchanged, of being liberated. They were not a race of people, distinguished by an indelible mark, as complexion, which was at the same time a mark of degradation. Slavery is so connected with the negro complexion among us, that it keeps down the negro even where he is freed. No respectable family will form a connexion with him. He is admitted to few civil rights and privileges. This was not the case with slavery as it existed of old. The worst, the most oppressive, the most bitter part of it, was formerly unknown

2. I object to this mode of making scripture justify it, because it does not follow from the command given to the servant to obey, that the master is right in holding a person in servitude such as exists among us. The right of the master cannot fairly be inferred from the duty of the servant as set forth in scripture. It is unquestionable that Christians in certain circumstances are bound to perform duties, which yet no others have a right to exact of them. Mat. v. 38, 42, will furnish us with an illus-

tration—"ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old times, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say unto you that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go with him a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh of thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."

In this passage in the space of four verses we have six commands, which we all are as much bound to obey, as the servant is to obey his master. But will any one pretend that the obligation the christian is under to obey, gives others a correspondent right over him in that particular? He is not, for instance, "to resist evil;" does it follow that any one has a right to do evil to him, because he must not resist? None, I apprehend, will pretend to it. If any smite him on the cheek, he is "to turn to him the other." Does it follow that any one has a right to smite him? The christian must give to him that asketh; does it follow that any one has a right to any thing he may choose to ask for? He is not to turn away from him that would borrow; does it follow that the borrower has a right to get by borrowing as much and as often as he pleases? The absurdity of inferring a right in others from the obligation imposed in any of these cases, is manifest!

The command given to the christian to submit to civil authority, will furnish us with a still better illustration, because one more in point. It is enjoined, Rom. xiii. 1. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers—for there is no power but of God. The powers that be, are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist receive to themselves damnation."

The command here to submit to the powers that be, the civil authorities (and for ought that appears the Ecclesiastical also, if there be any,) is as general and unqualified as any commands to servants to obey, that can be found; and in addition it is declared that those powers are ordained of God, and that to resist them exposes to damnation. Now our inference has been drawn from this and similar passages, not unlike the inference drawn

from the command to servants to obey; it has been argued that kings and civil rulers held their authority directly of God, and were accountable to none but God for their manner of using it. The divine rights of kings has been inferred, and extensively believed; and any attempt to limit royal authority, or any resistance to it however tyrannical, has been represented as "a resistance to God in the person of his vicegerents on earth." It is but a few weeks since the newspapers furnished a sample of this doctrine of the divine right of kings, from one of the royal family of Spain. "The legitimacy of kings," says the Duke Del Infantado, "comes from God: and in virtue of it, they are the absolute masters to effect in their kingdoms and among their subjects whatever changes they think proper, without being bound to render account thereof to any body on earth; or to ask the consent of other sovereigns, and much less of their ambassadors."

I apprehend that few if any christians in this country will admit that this doctrine can fairly be drawn from those passages to which its advocates appeal as proving it. They would say that the command in those passages to submit to civil authority presupposed that the civil authority would, on the whole, be beneficial in its administration; but that if it became tyrannical and oppressive, so that the evils which it inflicted were more than the good which it secured, it might and ought to be resisted.

The true state of the case appears to be this. From the condition in which human nature now is, some kind of civil authority is necessary. But it is necessary only as a means of averting evils and procuring benefits. It is to be "a terror to evil doers and a praise to them that do well." if this object be not secured, the obligation to submit to it ceases. All attempt therefore to prove by these passages the duty of an absolute and unconditional submission to civil authority, however tyrannical and oppressive, is futile.

Now it appears to me that the case is precisely the same with respect to servitude, and those passages of scripture which refer to it. From the state in which human nature now is, we may always expect to find various classes in society, some more or less subordinate to others. It is convenient, if not necessary that it should

be so. Taking the principle thus generally, we hesitate not to say that it is for the interest of society that it should be so. The duties growing out of these relations ought to be faithfully performed. Otherwise the good ends to be attained by these relations would not be secured. Now the scripture recognises these general relations as belonging to society: and it commands the faithful performance of the corresponding duties "servants obey your masters, &c." It does not with respect to servitude any more than with respect to government, enter into long details of personal rights, and limitations of authority. But in both cases we are to recollect that the good of man, of society as a whole, is the object to be accomplished, and the obligations to seek this is equally binding on all. The opinion that the many who are governed were made for the few who govern them, and have no rights but at their will and with their permission, is not one whit more unreasonable and absurd, than the opinion that those who fill subordinate places in society, who are servants, are made for those above them and have no rights with respect to them. The duty of superiors towards inferiors in society, or of masters towards servants, is to be learned from a different kind of passages than those which teach the duty of servants; in the same manner as the duty of kings and governors towards their subjects, are to be learned from different passages than those which teach the duty of subjects to their rulers.

Masters are commanded (Col. iv. 1.) to "give unto their servants that which is just and equal, knowing that they have a master in Heaven." Eph. vi. 9. "And ye masters do the same unto them, forbearing threatening, knowing that ye have a master in Heaven, neither is there respect of persons with him." Masters have here a command addressed to them. They are commanded to give to servants what is equal and right. Now the question arises what is equal and right in a master to a servant? The answer to this question belongs to my third objection against that interpretation of the command to servants to obey, which draws from it a justification of slavery as it exists among us.

3. Because such an inference from it, goes to set aside a general rule given by our Saviour to regulate all

our dealings with each other. "We are to do in all things to others whatsoever we would have them to do to us," "this" our Lord tells us "is the law and the prophets." Matthew vii, 12 It is against the spirit of the law of love. Matthew xxii, 40. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another.—Love worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law," Rom. xiii, 8—10. "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," Gal. v, 14. "Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart,and ofa good conscience and faith unfeigned." 1 Tim. i 15 That all men are bound to love their fellow-men as themselves, and as a practical rule are to do to others as they would have others do to them, is most manifest from these passages. This principle does not break up all the subordinate relations in society—it allows of them, and is perfectly consistent with the commands given respcting a faithful performance of the duties belonging to them, but it requires them to be filled in a way that is consistent with the rights, comfort and happiness of those who fill them,—it forbids whatever is incompatible with the law of love.

There are often to be met with, in the world subordinate places in society filled in a manner that is irreconcilable with the law of love,—a manner that places the rights and comfort and happiness of one class in society, altogether and irretrievably in the hands of another. This state of things wherever and whenever it exists, is wrong; and the Christian acts inconsistently with the law of love; and his professed subjection to it, in giving in to practices of this kind. He is not to be conformed to the world in things that violate the law of Christ.

The question now before us is this: Is negro slavery one of those cases that cannot be reconciled with the law of love ?—that is incompatible with "doing to others as we would have them do to us." These are questions that every man can answer for himself. They do not depend on a process of abstract reasoning. Were any master, by some change, to be placed with his family in a state of slavery, such as the negro slave is in among us, would he think it right in his master to retain him

and his offspring in it; would he think it compatible with the law of love? I feel confident that no man would think it right that others should hold him and his offspring in such a state of bondage! Every man then that would not in a change of circumstances have others hold him in slavery, is bound by that law of equity and love, not to hold others in slavery. It is not many years since some of our citizens were captured and reduced to slavery by some of the Barbary Powers. How was the public spirit moved at the report of it? and what prompt and decisive measures were taken to restore them to freedom? and how was it visited with vengeance on those Powers? and what a lesson were they taught to respect the unalienable rights of Americans? and how did the public voice approve of the strong ground taken in demanding satisfaction to our injured rights?

"God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of all the earth." The law of God, the law of love, the law of doing as we would be done by, is given to all, of every name and nation and complexion; and it does appear to me most manifest that negro slavery among us is incompatible with that law. We need but look at some of its leading features to be satisfied of this.

There are many things in negro slavery as it exists among us, to which we all would think it exceedingly hard and unjust, to be ourselves and families subjected. Now the law of "doing as we would be done by,"—the law of "loving our neighbor as ourselves," appears to me most manifestly, to forbid that we should subject others to these things.

The negro slave may, with a solitary exception, be said to be stript of all his rights. The law recogises his right to life, and makes some provisions to secure it from being violently taken away; but even those provisions are far short of what are deemed necessary to secure the life of the white man. How this difference is viewed in the eyes of him who "made of one blood all nations of men," and declares "himself no respecter of persons," deserves the serious consideration of all; and especially, of those who call God their Father, and profess to take his word for the rule of their conduct.

With the above exception, I hardly know the right,

natural, civil or religious, which the slave can be said to possess. All are claimed by the master; and the law of the land sustains his claim. The slave is reduced to a mere chattel—is held by his master as property, with absolute and uncontrolled authority to use him and treat him as his interest, or passion, or caprice may dictate. The slave may be bought and sold at pleasure; and that without any regard to his inclinations; without any regard to long and faithful services—and without any regard to family ties. His times of labor and of rest; the kind and degree of labor, depend on the will of his master. Should a master refuse the degree of rest needful to support nature—should he work his slave beyond his natural strength, the slave has no redress. No one is authorised to interfere. The master claims the whole proceeds of the labor of the slave; and that without acknowledging any obligation to give any compensation, more than a bare subsistence. And as to the means of subsistence, the kind and quantity of food and clothing, the master has it absolutely in his power. Should he give what is unhealthy in kind, and insufficient in quantity there is no redress. The master may punish his slave in what manner and degree he please, (not immediately taking life) for his faults, real or suspected; or for no fault at all. Should a master from prejudice, or caprice, or sheer cruelty, abuse and punish, and torture his slave every day as much as his nature would bear; I know of no law of the land, which would make it the duty, or enable any one, to interfere and stop the crying injustice. The master may cut off his slave, to what extent he please, from intercourse with the world. He may prevent his forming family connexions; or he may break them up, when formed. Where the relation of husband and wife exists in good faith between the parties, and is strengthened by all the endearments of a family of children, the pledges of their mutual love, the law still gives no protection. The master may sell the husband without the wife, or the wife without the husband; the parents without the children, or the children without the parents. He may sell them all—he may sell them all separately; one to one man, to be removed in one direction, and another to another man, to be taken in a different direction; as his interest, passion or caprice may influ-

ence. The owner may keep his slaves as ignorant as he please, or as ignorant as he can. He may refuse to teach them to read, and may forbid any other person to do it. He may oppose their religious instruction. He may prevent their attending the preaching of the gospel. He may place them in situations so remote from the public means of grace; and so lay his commands on them as to staying at home, that humanly speaking, the slave has no chance of hearing and understanding the gospel to his salvation. Yea so absolute is the power of the master and so cut off from all help and all defence, is the slave, that the slave may be obliged to enter on, and pursue sinful courses. Female slaves may be compelled to unclean living. The direct power of the owner or manager to enforce his wishes, by hard usage, and punishment in all its forms; and the want of means of defence on the part of the slave, even as to giving testimony against a white man, places the purity of the female, and the comfort and happiness of both male and female, as connected with female purity and mutual confidence, in the power of those over them. Whether slaves be allowed to perform parental duties—educate their children, or children perform filial duties, depends on the will of the owner.

It would be easy to add to the above statement other things in which the situation of the slave is most exposed—is most hard—is such that their masters would be utterly unwilling to be held in it themselves with their families—is such that masters would think it righteous in the sight of God and man, to run every hazard and contend even unto blood, rather than continue in it, and leave it a heritage of sufferings and wrongs to their children.

Now the single question I would press for an answer, given in the fear of God, is this:

Is the believer in the Bible, is the professor of the religion of Christ, justified—can he be be justified in the sight of him who is no respecter of persons?—Can he be justified by that word of God, which commands him to "love his neighbor as himself?"—by that command of Christ, "In all things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them," can he, I say, be justified in holding a fellow-creature deprived

of rights which, in his own case, he declares unalienable; and for which he would think himself justified in the sight of heaven and earth, in contending even unto blood?—Can he be justified in giving his countenance to a system, which is based on a total disregard for rights, which he puts in the same scale with his own existence, —a system, which opens the door for evils and oppressions, against which he would think it right to defend himself and family at every hazard? Can he be acquitted before that "God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity," in giving in to a practice, pregnant with so many evils: which presents such strong temptations to iniquity, and which operates in so many ways against the salvation of both master and slave?

I think it useless here to enumerate all the ways, in which professors of religion explain the "rule of doing as we would be done by," in its application to slavery. Perhaps the more common way is to apply the rule to the case in a very partial manner; in a manner so partial, as not at all to touch its most essential parts. Thus the whole matter of depriving a fellow creature of his rights; or (which in its morality is the same) withholding them from him, is passed over.

The rule of doing as we would be done by, is not applied to the act of withholding his rights; but to the treatment he receives, considered as thus stripped of them! We daily meet with persons, who appear to make the whole morality of holding slaves, consist in the manner of treating them. To the treatment of slaves, simply considered, they, in some sort, apply the rule; but to the act of holding a fellow creature in slavery, considered separately from his treatment in that state, they appear not to apply the rule at all. They take it for granted that the "rule of doing as we would be done by," allows the holding of slaves, provided we treat them well.

Now this to me appears, most manifestly, a partial application of the rule to the case. The most important part of the case is not tried by the rule at all. No question is made about stripping a fellow-creature of rights, or withholding them from him. And why not? Is it not one of those cases in which we can suppose ourselves in a change of place, and so apply the rule as

easily, as we can to any special act of treatment towards those in slavery? On what authority is it withdrawn from the catalogue, embraced by our Saviour in the first part of his rule: "In all things, &c. do ye, &c."

It appears to me capable, if not of absolute demonstration, yet of a high degree of proof, that the single act of withholding from a fellow-creature, his rights, or in other words, the holding him in slavery, is the "very head and front of the offending." This is the great original sin in every case where slavery, such as exists among us, is found. The treatment of slaves may be good or bad, kind or cruel, in all their various degrees; and may of course be more or less conformable to the "rule of doing as we would be done by." But the act of depriving a fellow-creature of his rights, to the extent the negro slave is deprived of his, or the act of withholding or refusing to restore them; or in other words, the act of holding him in slavery, is at all times and in all situations, a violation of the rule. For plainly no man who has common sense, and understands the case would be willing to be stripped of his rights, and held in slavery such as the negro is doomed to. So far from being willing to be treated thus, he would think it most hard, he would, if he understood his natural rights as most masters do, think it most unrighteous; and would think it right to make every effort to burst his bands, and go out free. Now on what principle is it, that the rule "of doing as he would be done by," is not applied to this case? may the professor of religion in the face of the rule and in the hearing of the declaration of his master, "with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again," meet out the hard measure of slavery to a fellow-creature; while he would at every hazard, refuse it in his own case?

I pass by for the present all the questions respecting the treatment of slaves, and the bearing it may have on their opinions on this subject. For the sake of getting that part of the question separated from the other, let us suppose that they are treated as well as they ought to be—that the law of doing as we would be done by, applied fairly to the case of their treatment, finds no fault; still he is in slavery, and what is implied in that? why he is stripped of all his rights—is entirely

under the power of another—is held as propery with a long train of disabilities, and deprivations, and liabilities to evils and oppressions, in all their varieties. Now the question returns, do the laws which Christ has given his people to regulate their conduct towards their fellow men, allow of this stripping another of his rights; or withholding them from him? It appears to me most manifest that they do not, and yet many appear to see the matter differently. It seems therefore necessary to attempt a farther illustration of it.

No injuries are more pernicious, to us, no injustice is more cruel than that done to our rights. This surely needs no proof in the day in which we live, and among the free and enlightened people of America. Injuries of no other kind, are to be compared with them. The reason is plain. While we are invested with our rights, they are our armor of defence against all kinds of evils, to which we are exposed from our fellow men, and where an injury is received, our rights in their legitimate operation, will procure us amends. They are an armor defensive and offensive. They afford security. But where in any case, they fail to do that, they enable us to procure amends, for the evil suffered.

But suppose we are injured in our just unalienable rights—suppose we are stripped of them—suppose they are forcibly withheld from us, our armor of defence is gone. We may be injured every day—we may be assailed on every part. We have no help. We have not the means of defending ourselves against the injury—we have not the means of getting amends for it.

To illustrate this case; suppose a man or a body of men, deprived of the single right of self defence, and that not for any crime but to enable those, who deprived them of the right, to accomplish certain purposes with them, their families, property, &c. the fact that some of these persons might owing to peculiar circumstances, feel but little inconvenience from the cruel measure, would not alter the character of the measure, nor lessen the guilt of those who passed it. The very nature and tendency of the measure was to expose them to oppression, and injury, and wrong, and that without redress. No one act of wrong that they might meet with under it nor any number of acts, would equal, in

their armory of wrong. the injustice and cruelty of the single act, which stripped them of the right of self-defence. and for the plain. simple reason, that the act which stripped them of the right of self defence, exposed them to all kinds of assaults and injuries, from all sorts of persons at all times and places

Or suppose any man or body of men put out of the protection of the Law; not for any crime but simply that those who did it might treat them as they please and serve themselves of them. To what does not their outlawry expose them? They may be watched and way laid and ensnared—they may be hunted with men and guns and dogs, and all kinds of offensive weapons—they may be deceived and betrayed, by acquaintances, relations, and friends. No person, no place, nor time, is so sacred as to afford protection. Now it would take nothing from the monstrous injustice of the outlawry, were we to suppose that some of the outlawed, owing to peculiar circumstances felt few, if any, of these evils, and for the obvious reason, that the act of outlawry exposed to all sorts of evils It was its nature to do this, and if they all did not fall on the victim no thanks to the act, nor to those who passed it. The act of outlawry is the great injury—the original sin in the case. More or less evil may flow from it, as times and other things may permit; but it produces no good of itself, but evil, only evil and that continually.

That injuries in our rights are the greatest evils we are exposed to—are great mother evils, which are prolific of others to an unknown extent, is well understood by the American people. This is evidenced by the fact, that both the wars which were carried on against England were for rights.

The special act of injury committed at the commencement of the revolutionary war, considered separately from the rights involved, would, we may safely say, not have produced war. The money drawn from us by the two penny tax on tea, and the stamp act, was not worth fighting about; except as it involved principle.

But had we yielded the principle that England might tax us at pleasure, who can tell what taxes she might have laid? what burdens imposed? She might have ground us to the dust; and made us hewers of wood and

drawers of water, to her wants or pride or extravagance.

In the last war for Sailors' rights, the case was much the same. The number of sailors impressed, was not so great; nor their condition on board the British fleet, so deplorable; (they fared as the British sailors did) as to make a resort to war indispensable; leaving out of view the rights involved. But had we given up the right of search and impressment, who can tell to what extent it might have gone? Who can tell how many thousands might have been torn from house and home and all that was dear, and made to spend their lives in fighting the battles of England?

We might refer to the political questions now agitated, with so much earnestness, between the national and state governments, and their adherents. Rights are the bone of contention. And they are contended for, with a zeal, which proves that their worth is understood. It is seen and felt and avowed, that with our rights is connected, every thing that is dear—that if they be lost, all is lost—if they be saved, all is safe.

That our rights are more important than any thing else, of which we can be deprived—that we may receive a deeper injury in our rights, than in any other way, (and of course may do a greater injury to another in his rights) is on the whole well understood by the mass of the people. They have been pretty well schooled on this matter.

Now to see a professor of religion, who is thus alive to the worth of rights; thus alive to the deep and irreparable injury which he may receive from that quarter; and who professes obedience to the command of his Lord, to "Love his neighbor as himself"—"to do in all things as he would be done by:"—to see him in applying this rule to the case of slavery, pass over the whole matter of rights, the very part where he is most alive in his own case—the very part where the deepest wound may be given—the greatest injustice committed,—and busy himself about the quantity of bread and meat and clothing, which will satisfy the rule—what shall we say of it! "What man seeing this, and having human feelings, does not blush, and hang his head to think himself a man."

What were the rights we were like to lose at the commencement of the revolutionary war? and to prevent

which we entered into that fearful strife? The right of not being taxed but with our own consent. And what were the rights contended for in the last war? The rights of not being subject to search and impressment. These rights were in the view of the people at large, worth contending for unto blood. The great bulk of professing christians thought so too; and gave ample proof that they approved of the war, as right and necessary, by contributing their part to support it; and many of them by treading the tented field and mingling in the strife of battle.

Now what are these rights, compared with the rights of which the slave is deprived? They are a mere nothing! and how can the christian slave holder say, he obeys Christ—"he does as he would be done by."

But it will perhaps be said, the slaves don't know their rights; they have never possessed them and can't estimate their loss! Now passing a good many questions, which it would be more easy to ask than to have answered, respecting the generosity and justice and general morality, of withholding from a fellow creature, his rights, because he is ignorant of them, or unable to assert them; I would like to know how it is reconciled with the morality of the gospel? what part of the teaching of Christ or his apostles, gives the shadow of authority for a course of conduct of this kind? How can it be reconciled with the rule of "doing as we would be done by?"

Apply the principle to the case of property. An orphan has a right to property; but owing to some untoward circumstance, in which he has been placed in infancy, and kept ever afterwards; he knows but little, if any thing about his rights. The whole matter is so situated, that while his right is good, his neighbor can keep him from the possession of it, and, to a great degree, ignorant of his right to it; and destitute of the information needful to make the best use of it, were he in any way to get it in possession.

What now would we say of the honesty of that neighbor, who would take advantage in such a case? What would we say of his excuse, "he does not know the property is his;" "he does not know his rights;" "he can make no estimate of his loss." And how much would he

mend the matter, in the eyes of every honest man, were he to say, the person whose property I hold, not only does not know that it is his; or at least I can hold it in spite of him; but he is too ignorant to make a good use of it, if he had it; when it was notorious that he had kept him in ignorance, as a means of keeping him from his rights? And were this defrauder and oppressor to plead the example of others, who acted in the same way; were he to plead that every man with a white face in his neighborhood, treated every one with a yellow or a black face, as he did the orphan boy, how much would he help his cause? Were he to profess the religion of the Lord Jesus, and take his seat at the sacramental table, while he still held on to the wages of unrighteousness; what would we say of his profession? what would we say of his religion? Suppose he were heard to say, and with great self complacency, "I am good to the orphan boy—I have, it is true, stripped him of his all, but I am not cruel to him. I give him bread and meat when he passes, and at times make him presents of my old clothes."

"How would public indignation brand such conduct." "How would the report of it spread from Dan to Beersheba;" and how would his name, blotted with disgrace, be handed down to posterity."

Now what is the loss of property, compared with the loss of liberty? what is poverty, compared with slavery? and on what page of scripture is the rule of justice, of doing as we would be done by, suspended, when we meet with a man with a black face?

But passing by the injustice, and the violation of the rule of "doing as we would be done by," manifested in withholding from a fellow creature rights, which in our own case, we would defend at every hazard; there are many other considerations which ought to induce professors of religion to loose no time in doing justice to that greatly injured people.

If the American people were justified in the sight of heaven, in contending to blood with England, for their just rights, (and most professors of religion appear to believe they were,) what would not the negro slave be justified in doing, in the sight of Him who is no respecter of persons, to regain his withholden rights? That at-

tempts at insurrection have been made, all know. That they will be made again, unless means be used to do justice to that injured people, we have every reason to fear. Blood has been shed again and again, on account of these attempts; and how much and how often it may be shed again, we know not.

Now a question rises here which, to me at least, has something awful in it: and I most earnestly entreat the attention of every conscientious person to it. On whom will lie, in the sight of God, the blood which is shed in these attempts? Will no part of the guilt rest on those who withhold from their fellow creatures their just rights? who refuse to restore them? and who put him to death for attempting to obtain what is his own, but what he cannot get in any other way? And will not the professor of religion who upholds such a system, who, instead of obeying the command (Isaiah 58: 6, 7) "to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke," gives his aid and support to such a system of oppression, be a partaker in the guilt? Will not that "judgment, which is to begin at the house of God," (1 Peter, 4: 17.) lay a part of the blood to his charge? If right be on the side of the slave; if that right be forcibly withholden, and his blood be shed for attempting to regain what will not be voluntarily restored, let the upholders of this system look well to what awaits them, from Him that judgeth righteously! We are aware that with many, this consideration will have little weight. It ought to have weight with him who believeth that "God maketh inquisition for blood," and has declared that "he shall have judgment without mercy, who showed no mercy."

But it is said the law of the land permits slavery. Admit that it does. Is the law of the land to set aside the law of God. Does the law of "loving our neighbor as ourselves," permit it? Does the law of "doing as we would be done by," permit it? I think I have shown sufficiently that it does not. Why plead the law of the land? Is not the law of God, the rule by which the christian ought to be governed? Are we allowed to depart from the law of God, whenever the law of the land permits? I admit that the law of the land permits us to hold slaves; and I may add, it permits many other things,

which the law of God forbids. It permits a man to be a drunkard, an unkind husband, an improvident father; it permits him to be a socinian, an infidel, or even an atheist. It permits him to withhold his aid from the support of religion; to utterly neglect the worship of God, both in public and private; with a whole catalogue of other permissions, which would fill a page to name them. And it does not require proof to shew, that many make the same use of these permissions, that the objector does in regard to holding a fellow creature in slavery. They practice accordingly. Will any one pretend that they are all right in the sight of God, because the law of the land permits them?

No law of the land obliges any man to hold slaves, any more than it obliges him to neglect religion, or be an Infidel. Any man who pleases, may act the just, and the generous part, of liberating his slaves; provided he observes those cautions which have been thought needful to prevent the community from being injured. Many have liberated their slaves; some are now doing it, and we hope the time will come, when, at least all who name the name of Christ, will do it. God has in his gracious providence opened an Asylum at Liberia and at Hayti, for that oppressed people: where they may be sent with great advantage to themselves, and to the honor of our country, and our common christianity.

Another consideration, which ought to induce professors of religion to lose no time in doing justice to that injured people, may be found in their sufferings and oppressions. It must in the nature of the case happen, that much cruel oppression and wrong, will take place under any system which places one class of persons, to the extent that slaves are, under the power of another. To say that public sentiment protects them, is little better than trifling with so serious a matter—it hardly deserves an answer. That public sentiment has some influence, no one denies; but the question is, does it give a suitable, a sufficient protection? Try the principle on another case, in which it manifestly has much more influence. It is undeniable, that public sentiment requires much more of masters among ourselves, than it does of masters towards their slaves. Little or no notice will be taken of conduct towards a slave, which, if it were repeated

towards a white man, would be reported all over the neighborhood, and call down unqualified condemnation. And yet with all this protection to the white man, from a more favorable public sentiment, what man would be willing to dispense with all other protection, for his person, family, character and property? And still the same man, who would think it an intolerable state of society, to have no other protection in his own case, is perhaps saying, public sentiment affords a very good protection for slaves!

It proves at least one thing. It proves that the rule of doing as we would be done by, is not applied equally to master and slave. But how can the professor of religion reconcile that with the command of Christ, to have but one, and to apply it "in all things." The man who is at all acquainted with human nature—who believes the account of it given in the sacred volume, must, we would think, at once own that no men ought to have such absolute authority over others, as masters have over slaves. It is not good for the master; but will greatly expose him to the sins of unkindness, injustice, severity, &c. and it will expose the slave to oppressions and wrongs, in ways innumerable.

There is no man who is acquainted with the system of negro slavery among us, but must know that there are many cases, in which the condition of the slave is most hard—when the labor is severe and oppressive—when the food and clothing both in kind and quantity, are defective—when the toils and labors of life, seldom meet with any compensation, or even approbation from the master—and when as to his spiritual concerns, it may be emphatically said, "no man cares for his soul"—and when all these personal evils, are embittered by the galling reflection,—this is the doom of my kindred—it awaits my children, and my childrens' children, it may be, for generations to come!

Now when oppressions, and injuries, and wrongs, are the natural results of a system; it is not enough that the christian should not himself oppress. He is bound by the law of love and justice, not to uphold or give support to such a system. If he gives his support to a system, which is thus fruitful in wrongs; he is accountable in part for the wrongs which are done.

Suppose a christian holds slaves as absolute property, and treats them well. His neighbor holds them as property, and treats them cruelly. He justifies himself however in holding them, by pointing to his neighbor, who professes religion. Now if we admit the right to hold slaves as property, in what way shall cruel usage be prevented? Will not every man claim the right, of using his property as he pleases? The system, as it appears to me, must be given up, or altered in some of its most essential features, before the door can be closed against the oppressions, and cruelties, and wrongs that take place under it. And does not the religious profession of the christian?—does the example of the Saviour, who came to "open prison doors and proclaim liberty to the captives"?—does not the law of love?—does not his duty to be a light in the world?—to do good to all men?—do not his hopes of a better world, founded on the grace and mercy of God?—do not all these considerations, give us a right to expect that he will take the lead in the benevolent work of relieving the oppressed? yea, that he will account it his privilege to make sacrifices, where so much evil may be prevented, and so "many thanksgivings be made to abound to God on his account?"

But oppressions and wrongs, although highly offensive to God, are not the only evils resulting from slavery. There are others equally, if not still more crying in the sight of God. It is a natural consequence of holding slaves as property, that the law cannot protect their marriages; that it can do almost nothing to protect their purity. While every man claims the right of property in his slaves; while slaves may be seized and sold for debt; while the owner may sell them at pleasure; their marriages can have no security. They can be little better than a system of temporary concubinage, and that of a very loose kind.

The frequent separations made by sales, and transfers, and removals of slaves, must tend to weaken and destroy in slaves, the sense of obligation to marriage fidelity. The entire uncertainty how long they may be allowed to remain, will naturally lead to temporary connexions, with a view simply to present gratification. And these views and feelings in the females, taken in connection with their entire dependence on the whites, and the nat-

ural tendency of the female mind, to desire the favor of those above them; must have the most pernicious effect on their purity. That this is the case, is notorious.—There is no reason to ascribe it to any peculiar constitutional tendency in the slave. It is the natural effect of the system. And any race of females, circumstanced as they are, would exhibit the same character.

But there is another view of this matter, which we cannot overlook. What effect will it have on the morals of the whites, to have about them, and under their absolute authority, a class of females, thus deprived of the strongest motives to purity? Females, so entirely dependent on them, that threatenings, and promises and management, can hardly fail to make them subservient to their wishes. Let any one look at the number of mulatto slaves among us, and their rapid increase, and draw his own inference. Oh, how many have fallen before this temptation! So many, that it has almost ceased to be a disgrace to fall. Oh, how many parents, how many professing parents, might trace the irreligion, and impiety, and licentiousness, and shame, of his or her prodigal son, to the temptations found in the female slaves of their own or neighbor's household? slaves who knew they would belong to young master, and very naturally concluded they must gratify his wishes.

Now when we read the repeated declarations, that fornicators and adulterers, shall not inherit the kingdom of God; and recollect the decision of our Saviour, that all intercourse beyond what takes place between one man and one woman in marriage faith, amounts, in the sight of God, to those crimes; how can the professor of religion, who holds slaves, and thus lays before the free and the bond this temptation, escape a participation in the guilt.

It is not enough for the slave holder to say, he abhors the crime. Is not the vice most dreadfully prevalent, under the system of slavery? And can any one deny, that the system naturally tends to produce it? Does it not open a door for it, and remove many of the strongest restraints? And is not the christian bound to God, to do all he can, to prevent evil?—to have a regard for the souls of all men? Most assuredly he is. And how can he stand clear in the sight of God, in giving his support

to a system, which gives so great facilities to that particular vice, that more than almost any other, hardens the heart, and leads to all kinds of iniquity?

We notice as another monstrous evil, connected with the system of negro slavery, that it is hostile to that instruction of slaves, which if not absolutely necessary, is exceedingly important to their salvation. The policy of most slave owners, is to keep their slaves in ignorance. This extends to religious matters. Very little attention is paid to instructing them in religion. Neither is this peculiar to the irreligious part of the community. It is manifest, that many professors of religion, pay almost no attention to this matter. And not one in five hundred pays as much attention to it, as he would feel bound to pay to his own children. But few teach their slaves to read God's Word; and how few pay attention to having it read to them. How many heads of families, who would think themselves greatly neglectful of the salvation of their children, if they did not cause them, at least occasionally, to attend preaching, yet pay almost no attention to induce their servants to attend! They may perhaps once in six months, or once a year, tell some of their servants they ought to attend preaching; but what facilities do they give them to attend? Their slaves have labored hard all the week, and it may be, from four to ten miles from the place of preaching Must be at home that evening, or early for work next morning; have no clothes fit to be seen in—wish to see a wife, a husband, or child, who lives in an opposite direction—has no time to do it in but on the Sabbath! The slave is blamed for not attending preaching! He may deserve blame. But taking the whole state of the case into view, the whole fault does not always lie on the slave. The master who holds him in slavery, who requires his constant labors, is often deeply criminal in the sight of God, for the irreligion of his slaves. And that many a professor of religion will, at last, have a fearful reckoning on this matter, we have no more doubt, than we have that they have a Master in heaven, who is no respecter of persons!

It is often said, and not without reason, that there is a growing indisposition among slaves to worship with their masters, and attend on the preaching of the whites. It is, by some, ascribed to the stubbornness and way-

wardness of the slaves. Far be it from me to say, that slaves are not to be blamed in this. To worship and serve God, is a duty so important, that nothing unpleasant in the circumstances of the duty, or the person officiating, or company of worshippers can justify a neglect of it.

While we admit this, we are obliged at the same time to say, that if the prejudices of the slave, against worshipping with the whites, or attending their preaching, grow out of a system, which, in a change of circumstances, would produce similar prejudices, in the minds of any other body of men; then, much of the blame lies on the system; and its supporters cannot stand clear in the sight of impartial heaven, of a participation in the guilt.

Now that this prejudice in slaves, against worshipping with the whites, may be traced to the system of slavery, is to me most certain. The relation between the master and the slave, is not one of mutual agreement; in which there is a *quid pro quo* (a stipulated service for a stipulated reward;) but one of *force* on the part of the master, and hard necessity, on the part of the slave. The whole intercourse between them, is of the same general character. It is absolute authority on the part of the master, and necessary submission on the part of the slave. Now as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, are unalienable rights; so the love of them is inlaid in our nature, and leaves us not, but with our life.

That slaves should think their case hard, is as natural as that they should think at all. And that this should lead to hard thoughts of those who forcibly hold them in bondage, is equally natural. That harsh usage, unkind treatment, and frequent fault finding on the part of masters, should greatly increase these hard thoughts, is one of the most natural things in the world. It could not, humanly speaking, be otherwise. That most slaves are disposed to complain of their situation—that they do complain, when comparing notes with each other, will hardly be disputed by those, who have paid much attention to the subject. Now with this general feeling of discontent, is it at all wonderful, that slaves should have little relish for joining with their masters in reli-

gious worship? Suppose the master a professor of religion and prays in his family. After toiling all day long, the slave comes home at night, and throws himself down on some place to rest. He was called out to work, it may be at day break—has toiled all day long under the eye of a watchful master, or overseer—has been found fault with as to his manner of doing his work —his not doing it faster—has been scolded and threatened and whipped—has been reproached as a lazy, idle, and trifling fellow—has made his meal, or meals, if two were allowed him, in the field, on dry bread, it may be, or possibly a little meat or vegetables with it. The night has closed his labors for the day. Presently, he hears the horn blow, or the bell ring for prayers. What now would be the reflections into which a slave, of no decided religious feelings, would be most likely to fall? Ah, white folks going to be religious now! Massah going to pray! He take his ease all day long—make poor negro do all de work—always finding fault—scolding and beating poor negro. He have plenty good things to eat—bacon and greens and all dat he wants; and his whiskey dram too?—Poor negro, who do all de work, get dry bread, glad to get a scrap of meat or a bone to gnaw! Massah dress fine and clean,—poor ne-negro most naked, and dirty—no time to wash cloths—and indeed almost none to wash. Why should poor black man be sarved so? If massah had right religion, he would'nt sarve poor negro so. De shoe pinch too tight for me—me don't think such prayers do good—me wont go to prayers.

Suppose Sabbath comes, and word is sent out to the slaves to go to preaching. What would probably be the reflections of a slave, of good common sense, but not under the operations of religion? Ah, white folks going to be mighty good to day—and mighty fine too! Me know how the fine clothes, boot, rings, and carriage, are to be paid for. Hard days work a plenty, before poor negro. Massah send word for me to go hear white preaching. Me don't like to be among white folks—me see dem all fine, and poor negro who do de work all ragged. Make me feel bad—me see them talk and show plenty good humor among demselves, but da don't shew it to poor negro—me don't like to hear white man

preach. He keep negro too—know how to make him work—he sure to preach dat negro must work hard, and make money for massah; but he don't tell white man he no right make black man a slave. He read de book to suit white folks—he preach to suit white folks—right religion don't do so—me don't like to go with white folks. White folks so love to make black folks work and wait on dem; me most 'fraid da try and do it in heaven, if God Almighty let dem—me don't like to be with white folks—me won't go to dare preaching.

Now I am well satisfied from a good deal of observation, that feelings of the kind above represented, have a very general existence, and a most disastrous influence on the religious interests of the slaves. And I am free to declare my settled conviction, that any race of people, placed in the same situation, would exhibit the same state of feelings. It could not, taking human nature as it now is, well be otherwise. It is the natural result of slavery, upon such creatures as we are. A sense of injury, will produce feelings of dislike and opposition. It will tend to produce distrust in the religious sincerity of the master. It will tend even to beget a prejudice against the religion which he professes.

Most of my readers may probably have heard of the dying man, who, when talked to about his preparation for heaven, and his prospects of getting there, enquired if such a neighbor, (his bitter enemy while living,) was in heaven, and, being answered, it was hoped he was, declared at once that, in that case, he did not wish to go there, that it was no place for him!

Whether the relation of this be true or not, it has much of human nature in it; and especially of human nature unenlightened, and unsanctified.

The question now is, how can professors of religion answer it to their own consciences, and to their God, for giving into, and practicing a system, which among many other evils, operates so directly against the salvation of their fellow men? "Woe to the world because of offences." "It must needs be that they come, but woe to the man by whom they come." It is an awful thing to lay stumbling blocks in the way of the salvation of souls! To do this for the sake of worldly gain; to do it for the sake of making property for children; how awful the

thought! On what does the life, and comfort, and final salvation of your children depend? Is it not on the grace and mercy of God? And what reason have you to expect that grace and mercy, while you show so little to the poor injured and oppressed slave? Remember who hath said, "He shall have judgment without mercy, who shewed no mercy."

There is another evil growing out of the system of slavery, which, taken alone, ought to make every professor of religion at once give it up. We mean the traffic carried on in slaves.

We suppose that most professors of religion—we suppose that most persons of all descriptions among us, agree in condemning the slave trade, as carried on from the coast of Africa. The injustice, the cruelty, the abominations of it, are condemned by all. And yet, allow me to ask, wherein is it worse than the trade carried on in slaves, in almost all parts of the slave holding states. Who, that lives on a public road; who, that attends a court house; who, that visits any place of trade, that has not seen them bought and sold like any other kinds of property? Who has not seen them drove in gangs along our public roads, often loaded with chains? And who does not know, that in this trade, little or no regard is paid to the dearest relations of life? That the husband and wife; that the parent and child, are separated without hesitation? that for the sake of a few dollars, yea, for the sake of a few shillings, the husband is sold to one person, and the wife to another, and the child to a third, to be removed in as many directions? Who does not know, that one of the most common modes, both of selling and of hiring, is to set them up, and let them go to the highest bidder, and that without any regard to the hands into which they may fall.

Many say they abhor the business of the negro trade, and cannot respect the man who follows it, and makes his gains from trading in human flesh. Too hard a name cannot easily be given to the nefareous traffic; and we could wish that a hundred fold more abhorrence, were felt for the man that follows it.

I cannot however see the wide difference, which some think they see, between holding slaves as property, and trading in them as property. And do not those very per-

sons, who say they abominate the traffic in slaves, claim the right of buying and selling a slave, when it suits their plans? Do they not in fact, at least many of them, buy and sell slaves? If it be not wrong in them to buy or sell a slave, on what principle, is it wrong for another person to do it? And if it be not wrong to do it once, by what rule is it wrong to do it twice–ten times–fifty times, or as some do, to make a business of it? If it be not wrong to buy and sell them in any part of the country, what makes it wrong for a man to buy them up, where they may be had, and take them to where they are more in demand, and sell them to those who wish to buy? I cannot in the principle see the difference, which many speak of, and am satisfied it does not exist.

Take what is considered the mildest form, in which separation and transfers of slaves, take place—that of parcelling them out among children and relations. This is constantly taking place among slave holders, and is done without hesitation by many, who feel objections to selling them. In what now is this, better for the slave, than the mode of selling them? Do they certainly get better masters, in this way, than they would by being sold? No one will pretend this And are they not liable to the same separations, of husbands and wives, of parents and children, of brothers and sisters, that they would be, by being sold? Unquestionably they are. The members of a white family, very seldom live so near each other, as to prevent these separations. Yea separations, as wide and entire are often made by the partitions of slaves among children and relations, as would be made by letting them pass through the hands of a negro trader. That more regard is paid to the connexions of slaves, in these divisions of them among children, has more in promise than in reality. It is not often that any of the children wish to lose any thing, in the attempts that may be made, to accommodate the slave. And very often a few dollars, or a few shillings of supposed interest, will weigh more than any consideration, of the connexions of the slave. This is often the case when the connexions of the slave are in the same family of owners. But it much more frequently happens, that the connexions of the slave, are not in the same family. The husband is in one family, the wife and children in another; the parents, brothers

and sisters in the third, fourth, and fifth. Here are many interests bearing on the case. No one wishes to lose in the arrangement. And if one master has a heart to feel for the condition of the slave, and makes an attempt to prevent separations, by offering to sell his interests, or buy up the interests of others; how many difficulties are usually met with? Some have not the means, or the inclination to buy; others do not wish to sell. And not unfrequently, the love of gain, leads to an effort to get a good bargain. In proportion to the solicitude of one party, to prevent a separation, how often does the other drive for a good bargain. If the proposition is to buy of him, he will raise the price of his slave, far beyond what is fair, calculating on the necessity of the case.—If on the other hand, it is proposed to sell to him, not near the market price is offered. The result mostly is, that the separations take place. And often they are, and must, from the distance to which they are removed, be final.

But as to the fact of the case, we need not expect the trade to stop, while slavery exists among us, as it now does. It most assuredly, will go on. While slaves are held as property, there will be trade in that property;—And where a trade is attended with a profit, such as attends the trade in slaves to the South, it will be carried on, with all that disregard to family ties—with all that unfeelingness and cruelty, that now attends it. No passion is more unfeeling and cruel than avarice. "The love of money is the root of all evil."

It is, in my view, utterly idle for any to pretend a great horror, at negro trading, and all the evils that are connected with it, while they hold slaves themselves, and thus support the system. Slavery itself is the tree that produces the poisonous fruits; and while we cultivate the tree, its fruits will abound among us. Let those who have hearts to feel a fellow creature's woes, and a fellow creature's wrongs, take the only effectual mode of putting an end to the evil. Let them abandon slavery altogether, and use their best efforts to extirpate it from the face of the earth. If they have no heart to do this—if they can make no sacrifice, and give no help to the millions that lie under the galling chains—if their own ease, and their share of property in human

flesh weighs more with them than the wrongs, and degradation, and oppressions, and groans, of that greatly injured people; let them for consistency's sake, if nothing else, leave off their pity and complaints about evils and sufferings, which they not only refuse to take the only effectual means to prevent; but directly contribute to perpetuate and multiply, by upholding a system from which they naturally spring. Fruitless pity is not what the case needs—It needs not the sympathetic look, or the condoling words, of the Priest and Levite "passing by on the other side;" but the active services of the good Samaritan, who can sacrifice safety, and time and property—and be the neighbor indeed, to a fellow creature, who cannot help himself. Let the professor of religion, remember the command of his Lord, "go and do thou likewise;" not forgetting that if he imitate the Priest and Levite, instead of the good Samaritan, he will disgrace his profession, and have a fearful account to render to his Lord.

Were professors of religion, who hold slaves, to compare their opinions and practice with regard to slavery, with their opinions and practice respecting some things which they condemn—with fashionable amusements for instance—with dancing, balls, horse racing, cock fighting, gambling, & attending the theatre; I know not how, they could avoid seeing their own inconsistency. Most professors of religion, condemn these amusements; and with their preachers at their head, think it so very much out of character, for a professor of religion, to attend to them, or encourage their children to do it, that the church member who attends any of them, were it only to accompany a child, would in all probability have to answer for it to the officers of the church.

Ask them why it is wrong to partake in a dance? to attend a ball? to go to a horse race? to take their family to the theatre? Ask for the passage or passages of scripture, which condemns any and each of these amusements? You will probably be answered, that it is true these amusements are not in so many words, named and condemned in scripture; and most likely because they were not practiced, in precisely their present forms, when the scripture was written; but that they are condemned by those passages, which command us "not to be con-

formed to the world," but to "come out and be separate," to go not in the way of temptation—to shun the appearance of evil. In short, we would be told, that these amusements, tend to draw off the mind from religion—that they produce and strengthen feelings, which are at war with the interests of the soul—that they produce vanity, love of the world, a fondness for shew and display—that they lead to laciviousness, and sensuality—and tend to hardness of heart, and disregard to the rights of others.

We admit all this. We admit that these amusements do so naturally oppose the spirit of the gospel, that those who have the care of souls, and the interests of religion, ought, however unpopular it may be, and whatever reproach it may draw on them, to use their influence to discountenance them.

Now compare these amusements and their effects, with slavery and its effects! Compare them as to the scriptures, which condemn them directly, or condemn their principle, or condemn them on account of their tendency to evil!

It will hardly be pretended that these amusements are in so many words named and condemned in scripture. But that there are general rules for the regulating of our conduct, which condemn them, we readily admit. We have noticed several of them above. Now will any one pretend—will any christian pretend, that there are no general principles given to regulate our conduct towards our fellow men? Does not the rule, "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," relate as certainly to the feelings and conduct we are to manifest towards our neighbor, as the rule, "be not conformed to this world," relates to our not joining the world in its sins and follies? Does not the great practical rule given by our Lord, "In all things whatsoever you would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them," apply as certainly to all our dealings with our fellow men, as the rule "come out from the world and be separate," applies to our separating ourselves from the world, as devoted to amusements? Does it not as directly condemn our depriving our fellow creatures of their rights, and holding them in slavery, when we would at every hazard oppose being treated so ourselves, as any general rule which can be brought to

condemn fashionable amusements? Is any one willing to be stript of his rights and held as a slave? Is any one willing to be as much at the mercy of another, as the slave is? Is any one willing to lie under all the disabilities that belongs to the state of slavery—and to be liable to all the evils to which the slave is liable? What man is there, who would not run every risk, and hazard every thing, before he would descend to that condition, with his family? And does not the rule of doing as we would be done by, apply to this case? Does not our Lord say, "In all things?" The man who can see in the words "be not conformed to this world," a plain condemnation of dancing, balls, &c. and yet can see in the rule, "In all things that ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," nothing that touches holding others in slavery, has, to say the least, a mode of seeing things, which to me is not a little surprising. The application of the latter rule to slavery, is so direct and straight forward, and obvious, compared with that of the other, to amusements; that it requires an effort to suppose, that a person, who is so clear in the one case, can with his attention drawn to the other, yet be blind to its application.

And as to the tendency of these amusements, to worldly affections, to vanity, to sensuality &c. I feel confident, that it is not equal, yea, I think not to be compared with the tendency of slavery, to hardness of heart, injustice, oppression, licentiousness and a whole train of kindred evils. Let any one examine into the effect of attending dancings, balls, the theatre, &c. on those persons, who are devoted to them, and estimate the proportion, whose irreligion has been confirmed, whose worldly spirit has been strengthened, and whose purity has been lost through their influence; and compare it with the multitudes, who through the influence of slavery, have been formed to a harsh, unfeelling, overbearing, oppressive, & licentious character? Is it not a fact, that the general manner of treating slaves, (owing chiefly to the absolute authority of the master, and the necessary subjection of the slave,) is positive, rough, and unfeeling; compared with the manner of treating any other persons? In the case of hired servants, rough, and cruel treatment, will soon leave the master to do his

own work, and wait on himself—hired servants will not bear it. This very circumstance will tend to beget respect for the feelings of those, in the lower places of society—it will lead to a mildness of manner—a regard for the rights and feelings of those about us. The effect will be creditable to the master, and beneficial to society. But in the case of slavery, the matter is otherwise. The slave must submit to all things, and bear all things. However unreasonable the requirements—however rough their treatment—however abusive the language used towards them, they must submit to it, and for the most part, without a complaint. Can any one who takes a fair view of the condition of slaves, considered as absolutely under the power of their masters,—as not protected in their family relations by law—as subject to separation at the pleasure of their owners—as deprived of the best protection to their purity, and conjugal fidelity—can any one, who takes a full view of the subject, in all its bearings, doubt that greater evils flow from it than from dances, balls, and the whole round of fashionable amusements? I feel very confident that all these amusements put together, do not produce one tenth part of the vice, that slavery does; nor do one tenth part as much, to vitiate the morals of society.

Now to me there appears a manifest inconsistency in professors of religion and ministers of the gospel, making such an outcry against these amusements, while they give into the practice of slave holding. The fault is not in opposing amusements, but in allowing themselves to indulge in a practice, ten-fold more injurious to morals and religion. The advocates of amusements can say, in palliation of their practice, if injury be done, it is done to ourselves only. "We force no one to join us"—"all is voluntary." Can the slave holder say as much respecting slavery? Is the slave allowed to choose in the matter? If the professor of religion replies, that he is not sure that slavery is wrong, cannot, and do not many say the some of their favorite amusements? But does that satisfy the professor. Will he allow his fellow professor to take the lead in all these amusements, and yet admit him to all the privileges of the church? Suppose a preacher of the gospel were to join in these amusements, and say "he was not sure they were wrong," that

"he could without injury to himself, participate in them," "that the law of the land allowed of them," that he claimed his right to join in them"—that if any thought them injurious to him, he would be free to abstain from them;" what would be thought of the religion of such a preacher, by most, if not all, classes of professing christians? And yet wherein does it differ from what takes place respecting slavery? I have shown, I think, to the satisfaction of the candid, and unprejudiced, that slavery is as much opposed to the "law of God"—the law of "doing as we would be done by," as the amusements above referred to, are to the command, "to come out from the world and be separate"—to conform not to it. That the tendency of slavery is more injurious to society than amusements, appears to me sufficiently manifest, from the brief view given of it above. Now to see professors of religion, opposing the one, even to shutting out of the church its advocates, while they practice the other, all their lives long, and bring up their children to do so too, is, to me, a most glaring inconsistency. That it is viewed in the same point of light, by multitudes, in the church, and out of the church, is undeniable.

Or take these amusements, in which the love of pleasure is connected with the love of ill gotten gains—as cock fighting, horse racing, card playing, &c. Over and above the tendency of these practices, to produce vanity, love of the world, and all those passions, which dancing, balls, &c. are charged with producing; they are charged with leading to covetousness, injustice, fraud, cruelty, and a whole train of kindred evils. Their tendency to these evils is obundantly dwelt on, to prove that they are opposed to the spirit of the gospel, and are sinful in the sight of God. Cock fighting, and horse racing, are said to be cruel to the animals· and connected with betting, they, as well as gambling, lead to covetousness, fraud, injustice, and a crowd of evils. We have no doubt that this is their character, and that they ought to be opposed.

But now, I ask, are not the same evils chargeable on negro slavery, and in a much greater degree? Horse racing and cock fighting are cruel! Admit it. The cruelty, however, is chiefly confined to the hour of the race and the fight. At other times, those kept animals are usually well provided for. Were it not that we wish to avoid giving offence, we would say, that the race-horse

and the game cock, are usually much better taken care of, than very many slaves. But is there no cruelty in depriving our fellow creatures of their rights, and that for no crime? Is there no cruelty in keeping them from generation to generation, in a state of absolute subjection? Is there no cruelty in making them drudges all their lives long, and their children after them, and that without any compensation but food and raiment, and that of the coarsest kind, and often in scant measure? Is there no cruelty in treating them as property, and sacrificing the most intimate relations, the strongest endearments of life; as pleasure, interest, passion, or caprice may influence? Is there no cruelty in so shutting them up in slavery, as to leave no door to escape—no chance of rising in society—no opportunity of providing for those, who are bone of their bone and flesh of their flesh? Is there no cruelty in all this? (And the half is not told.) What then is cruelty? Are all our sensibilities to be stirred up at the sufferings of a game cock in the pit, or the race horse on the turf, and no notice taken of the wrongs and oppressions of our kind, prolonged from generation to generation? And this from the professed followers of the compassionate Saviour?—of him who would not break the bruised reed?—who came to proclaim deliverance to captives, and who commanded his followers "to do in all things to ohers as they would have others to do unto them," yea, "to be merciful as their Father in heaven is merciful? Tell it not in Gath and publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the enemies of our religion, have indeed cause of triumph."

But cock fighting, horse racing, card playing, &c. lead, it is said to covetousness, injustice, fraud, and a whole train of similar evils. We readily admit it; and join in condemning them, as injurious to morals and religion. And we may ask, is not slavery productive of the same, with evil passions and practices, and that in a much greater degree? The gambler instead of following some honest business for a livelihood, covets and seeks the property of his neighbor, in a way that gives no just return for value received. Very well: the evil is a great one. How is it with the slave holder?—Does he render a fair return to the slave for what he takes from him? He takes more than property—more than the product of labor, from the slave—he takes from him his liberty—

his right to seek his own happiness—the right to enjoy the fruit of his labor—and provide for himself and children. Is there no coveting and taking, what of right belongs to another?

But the gambler uses unfair means to get the property of others? Admit it. He cheats his neighbor, it may be, out of it. Now we wish to know, how much worse it is, to cheat our fellow men out of the fruit of their labor; than to take it from them by force? Is the slave voluntary in giving up the fruit of his labor? No one will pretend that he is. It is a case of galling necessity. Resistance would only add to his suffering!

The gambler can say in palliation of his practice, that he meets his neighbor on fair ground. They both agree to put so much at stake. His neighbor, has as good a chance to win, as he has If he does cheat his neighbor, his neighbor would, if he could, cheat him. There is no force in the matter. He obliges no man to play, and lose. Can the slave holder say as much in palliation of holding slaves, and taking from them the fruit of their labor? Has the slave had any choice in the matter? Has he had any chance to win the game? None at all. He is retained in slavery, as his forefathers were reduced to it, by force—he is obliged to work and toil all his life long for another; and the fruit of his labor, is claimed by the strong arm of power. Is there nothing of injustice in all this? Is there nothing of coveting and taking. what does not belong to us? And yet it may be that the professor of religion together with his preacher, will apply the threatenings of God's wrath against the workers of iniquity, to the cock fighter, the horse racer, the card player, and the frequenter of other fashionable amusements; while they hold their fellow creatures forcibly in slavery—take from them all the fruit of their labor—and expose them to all the evils and vice, to which their condition as slaves makes them liable. Who can help thinking of those whom our Saviour rebuked for "straining at a gnat while they swallowed a camel?" For "tything mint and rhue, and all manner of herbs, while they omitted the weightier matters of the law, justice, mercy, and faith?" Whether professsors of religion, who hold slaves, will see the inconsistency or not, it is seen and noted by others; and that to the no small discredit of religion, and their pro-

fession of it. The evil already done, the evil now doing, by such departures from the spirit of the gospel, and such evading the plain rules of conduct, "commanding us to do as we would be done by," tends to lower the standard of morality, and to create doubts as to the truth of the gospel, which the zeal of professors for it, manifested in declarations against amusements, will not remove. But it may be asked, what would I have the professor of religion to do with his slaves? I answer let him take measures without delay, to restore to them those rights, of which they have been so long deprived. Let him at once consider them as of right free, and entitled to the fruit of their labor. Let him consider them as persons, who in the sight of heaven, are entitled to rights and privileges, which the laws of the land have put in his power; but which the laws of God, and the command of Christ, and his profession of religion, oblige him most conscientiously, as a steward of God, to regard and restore to them. Let him view himself as solemnly bound by the command of Christ, not to care only for his own things, but also for the things of others—for the things of the slave. Let him lose no time in imparting to the slave, such information as may enable him to choose for himself the place where he had best settle, the mode of living he had best pursue. And let him allow them fair wages for their labor, while they may continue with him.

The law of God requires that a return be made to persons, defrauded or injured. The wrongs which slaves have already endured, the services and labors which they have performed, ought, to say the least, to secure to them, all the helps needful, to enable them to choose intelligibly a future residence and something to begin with.

In the dispensations of providence, there are now openings for the comfortable settlement of slaves, which are among the signs of the times. The island of St. Domingo is now altogether in the hands of the blacks. The climate is delightful and well suited to the habits of that people. The government is one under which, as much peace and security and comfort may be enjoyed, as is found under most governments. There is room on that island for twice as many inhabitants, in addition to its present population, as there are slaves in the United States. Emigrants from this country, are cheerfully re-

ceived. The voyage is short. Their passage from our sea board, would cost but a few dollars apiece.

The western coast of Africa opens a wide field for emigration. There is vacant territory on that coast, or territory which could be procured for a mere trifle, that would settle ten, yea twenty times as many negroes as are in the United States. While the climate is unhealthy for whites, experience has sufficiently proved, that it is not more unhealthy, nor even as much so, to the blacks, as our southern States, are to the whites.

The expense of a removal to, and settlement on, that coast, could soon be provided for. Were masters to give their slaves fair wages for one year, (and when they have had their labor for twenty or thirty years, it would be a small return,) it would enable a considerable number of them, to remove to that country. All could not of course go at once. A part could soon go. Others could remain and work for their present masters, or other persons, for a fair hire, for a shorter or longer time, until they were ready. This would at once give masters time to conform to the new state of things themselves; and allow of a similar preparation on the part of the slaves. There is no difficulty, I am satisfied; in the case, which could not be removed, were persons really willing and disposed to do justice to that people. If the members of a church, if the professors of religion in a neighborhood, were to agree, that for Christ's sake and the credit of religion, they would act thus towards their slaves—were they to agree as a band of brothers, as the members of Christ's visible body, that they would give mutual aid, to each other, the thing could be done with ease. And I am persuaded that many, who are not professors of religion, would join in the good work—God would be glorified—the benevolence and efficacy of religion, be acknowledged, and great good be done to our fellow men.

But it will be objected, are we to give up our property—are we to beggar ourselves and children? Whoever heard the like? I reply, that the sacrifice is not one whit greater, nor half so great, as thousands have been called on, in every age of the church, to make for the sake of Christ and religion. It is little, compared with what many are now called on to make, on embracing the gospel. When the Lord Jesus told the young man, to sell all that he had and distribute to the poor, and deny

himself and take up his cross and follow him," the young man thought the sacrifice too great. He went away "sorrowful." We hear of him no more! What professor does not condemn the young man, for refusing to make the sacrifice? And will the same professor refuse to make the sacrifice, which the Saviour's rule "of doing as he would be done by," requires at his hands?

When the apostles went forth and preached the gospel, to the Jews and the Gentiles, what multitudes, if they embraced it, were obliged to suffer "the loss of all things" for Christ's sake. Thousands had their living by arts connected with superstition, some like Demetrius and the craftsmen, had their gains, by making shrines and images for gods and goddesses—many served in the temples as priests—and almost all had many instruments of idolatry, which christianity altogether forbid. The books alone of those, "who used curious arts," in the single city of Ephesus, (Acts 19. 19) were worth fifty thousand pieces of silver. These were burned—and the loss fell on that part of the new converts, to whom they belonged." The loss of property, was but a small part of the sacrifice, which many had to make, and now have to make, when they embrace the gospel. How many have been cast off by friends and kindred? How many followed with rage and persecution? How many exposed to the faggot and the stake? Many in every age, have been deterred by these trials, from obeying the gospel, to life everlasting—they have, in saving themselves from these trials, lost their souls; while those, who lost their lives for Christ's sake, have found them safe in the keeping of God.

It is yet a law of Christ, that it is "through tribulation, his faithful followers must enter the kingdom." The Hindoo who embraces the gospel, looses his *cast*, and is counted by his friends as the filth of the world, and as the offscouring of all things." The Mahommedan who renounces the false prophet, and embraces christianity, is by the laws of Mahomedism, liable to death—and we know that there are not wanting instances, and late instances, of that law being put into execution.

The Jew who embraces christianity, is liable to be cast off, by his nearest and dearest friends, and be denied even the necessaries of life. But we need not go so far from home. Many, yea, many a hearer of the gospel among us, feels the importance of religion, but he

would have to do so many things, which he now neglects—to leave off so many practices, which he now indulges in—mortify so many lusts, which he now cherishes—and meet with so many trials, from his old companions in sin—and in short, he would have to enter a course so entirely different, from his whole former practice and habits, that he cannot find it in his heart to comply. He hopes that some allowance will be made in his case—that he will be excused for not making so great sacrifices! How many in every age, for similar reasons, have either "gone away sorrowful" from the gospel, having no heart to make the sacrifices, which it required; or have hoped that those duties, which they did not do, those commands, which they did not obey, would be overlooked, on account of their obedience and zeal in other matters. That the number has been great, yea, very great, we have no doubt. "Many will say Lord, Lord, have we not eat and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets: to whom he will answer, I never knew you, depart from me all ye workers of iniquity."

We say then, and we say it with confidence, that the sacrifice (if a sacrifice it ought to be called, to do an act of justice to a fellow creature) which we believe that the word of God, the credit of religion, and the state of things among us, call on all, but especially professors of religion to make, with respect to slaves, is not so great, as many in every age of the church, as many are now called on to make, for the sake of religion. And are christians in this country, who, through the blessing of God, have privileges and advantages, which no other people ever possessed—who have the finest country in the world—the best government—the most civil and religious privileges—are they to have no trials at all? Nothing to prove the truth of their love, and the sincerity of their obedience? Are they to enter the kingdom, without tribulation? What justifies such an expectation? If there ever were christians on the face of the earth, who were bound to respect the rights of others, they are the christians in the United States: For God hath given them to know their rights, and possess them—"and to whom much is given from them much will be required." If ever there were christians, who were bound "to do good and to communicate"—"to do good to all men"—to

be lights in the world"—and a "salt in the earth," they are those of our country. "The lines have fallen to them in pleasant places, and they have a goodly heritage."

By one of these mysterious providences, through which God prepares trials in every age, for his people, he has prepared a trial for their love to him, and a proof of their obedience to his laws; for christians among us. As the sin of Israel for sparing the Philistines and Canaanites, contrary to God's command, prepared a trial for their children; so the sin of our forefathers, in bringing to this country and reducing to slavery, the negro race, has prepared a trial for us. Israel was proved by the spared Canaanites whether they would obey the voice of the Lord; and we are tried with respect to our slaves, whether we will obey the "law of loving our neighbor as ourselves"—Whether we will "do as we would be done by"—Whether the possession of right and privileges and blessings, enjoyed by no other people, will induce us to a more sacred regard for the rights of others—and make our hand more liberal, in imparting our blessings to all our fellow men.

The trial is well adapted to our situation as a free and highly favored people—one that accords with the spirit of the age. The trial before the christian world now, is not a temptation to gross idolatry; the spirit of the age prevents that from being a temptation: there is almost no tendency that way—nor is it a temptation to christian superstition: The age of that has passed: but one, if not a leading trial, now is, respecting civil and religious rights. The age is an age of liberty. New lights have broke on the human mind, respecting these subjects. Many know and contend for their own rights; but are unwilling to acknowledge the rights of others! The oppressions and unjust usurpation of one part of mankind over the other, is seen and owned, yet how hard do many find it, to let go unjust authority—to restore to others rights, which have long been withheld from them! What excuses, what parleying, what substitutes; as being good to them &c. What complaining that they are not allowed to go on as their fathers did—What holding on to authority, and winking hard against the light! Ah, here is one of the trials of the age—not peculiar to our own country; but assuredly trying many among us, and by the trial, showing how hard many find it, to obey Christ, when sacrifices lie in the way.

I hardly know a more painful view of human nature, than is presented to us, in the unwillingness of those, who in any way, fair, or foul, have others under their power, to allow them their natural rights. How unwilling was England to restore to us our rights? How reluctant is Spain to admit the rights of her former colonies? How does the Turk strive to retain the Greek in chains? And how do the legitimates of Europe, the Holy Alliance, exert all their power, to withhold from the people, their long lost rights? The professor of religion among us, pities the sufferings of the injured people, and reprobates, the ungenerous, unjust, and cruel conduct of these rulers; and yet many perhaps hold hard on a fellow creature, more oppressed than those with whom he sympathises. Oh religion, how art thou wounded in the house of thy friends.

THE END.

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